

Labour Market News

CENTRAL ALBERTA

Alberta Employment and Immigration

JOB SEEKERS

Big buildings and big opportunities

Careers in non-residential construction

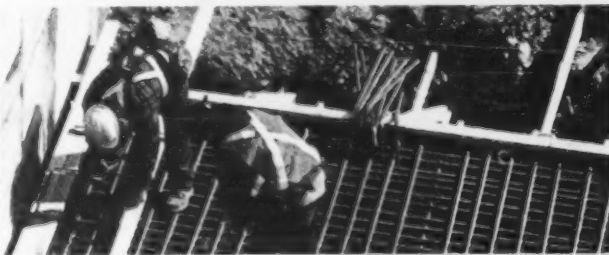
There's a certain satisfaction that comes with working in non-residential construction, explains Bill Stewart, vice-president of Merit Contractors Association. "You drive down the road and look at a new mall or plant and say 'I helped build that.'"

And in Central Alberta there's no shortage of career opportunities to help lay the foundation for the region's future in steel, concrete and brick.

Central Alberta is enjoying an historic boom in non-residential construction. New shopping malls, office buildings and industrial facilities are going up in nearly every community and turning blueprints into actual buildings will require thousands of people working in dozens of occupations, from labourers to plumbers and electricians. It will also require workers who are comfortable with the nature of non-residential construction.

"In residential work there's going to be a different approach," says Stewart. "There's a focus on detail for finishing work. Industrial and commercial work is on a much larger scale, and it's often much rougher. You wouldn't want industrial concrete and finishing in your basement, but it has a job to do on an industrial site." For someone who enjoys working with large machinery and building something that may not always be pretty but works, non-residential construction is worth taking a look at.

Continued on page 2



Central Alberta has a wealth of career opportunities in construction, and industrial and commercial projects are a large part of the picture.



How an employee is introduced to their work on the first day can help retain the initial enthusiasm.

EMPLOYERS

First impressions count

Orientation and how to do it well

The first few hours with a new employee is valuable time, and a time employers may never get back, since the employee's motivation is high and they're listening. A good orientation to the workplace at this early stage will not only help employers explain the basics, but it will help set a tone that can last. A good orientation may even help stop a promising employee from becoming another turnover statistic.

One industry that takes orientation very seriously is accommodation and food services. Staffing is often the single largest expense in this labour-intensive sector and as a peak season begins, there's a need to get workers started quickly and efficiently. "It's very important to make sure your new employees know everything about the business and what to expect," says Carla Gilchrist, general manager at Original Joe's Red Deer location.

Even if it takes some time, orientation is always worth the effort. The initial enthusiasm can quickly turn sour if the employee is thrown into the deep end. "My very first job serving," says Gilchrist. "I was just thrown into it, and that was a little intense." Gilchrist managed to learn on her own, but many won't have the patience, deciding instead to simply walk away.

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Landscaping & horticulture

JOB SEEKER FEATURE STORY

Non-residential construction careers

The variety of work available in non-residential construction is staggering. At the early stages of a project, contractors need heavy equipment operators, cribbers, reinforcement specialists, truck drivers, carpenters and cement workers to lay the foundation. During construction the emphasis moves to crane operators, ironworkers, welders, sheet metal workers and air conditioning specialists—to name a few. Finally, glaziers, weatherproofers, detailers and electricians add the final touches—an important stage in commercial projects, but less so for industrial buildings.

The work is often technical and relies extensively on qualified journeymen and apprentices, but in construction there is plenty of room for entry-level labourers, if they have a few key safety courses.

Getting started

Construction workers must be able to work safely on the job site and often require a First Aid certificate, Construction Safety Training System (CSTS) and sometimes WHMIS (regional training can be found under 'Safety Consultants and Training in the Yellow Pages'). Job hunters can pick up all three certificates and valuable training in Merit's two-week Boot Camp program. The course is free for qualified candidates, and graduates not only have a better chance of landing a labourer job, but they have a better chance of convincing their employer to take them on as an apprentice—the first step to becoming a journeyman.

The backbone of construction—journeymen

Journeymen are workers who have learned their trade through the apprenticeship system—a combination of work experience, mentoring on the job and classroom courses. Carpenters, plumbers and electricians are all examples of trades. While labourers can be the unsung heroes of the worksite—doing a little bit of everything—journeymen really are the backbone of the industry and do the majority of the work. They are also paid considerably more than labourers and enjoy far greater job security. "Electricians really never get laid off," explains Gerald Clark, human resources manager for field staff with Clark Builders.

With the economy doing so well and a large backlog of work in Central Alberta, it's an ideal time for labourers to enter the trades.

The ups and downs of construction

In Central Alberta there is no shortage of work, and no shortage of companies willing to take on an apprentice. It wasn't always that way. Veteran construction workers remember a time when jobs were scarce. No one expects this industry to take a tumble in the near future. Still, anyone getting into construction needs to be aware that projects come and go, and the industry does have a seasonal peak during the summer.

"It's the nature of the business," says Clark. When times did get rough for Clark Builders and the industry, Clark Builders turned to projects in Russia and elsewhere to keep their business going. It may not be ideal, but as Clark explains, "this is an industry where you can always find work somewhere." This is also an industry that's trying very hard to make sure the talent stays with the industry through any short term downturn so they are available for the next big project.

"It's been years since we've let people go," says Clark. "Between January and June when it gets a little slower, we'll send apprentices in for training. We'll also lend people to other companies between projects. We'll renovate trailers or whatever we can to keep our staff who want to work busy."

Union or non-union?

In Alberta construction workers can work in unionized or non-union companies. Generally, union workers will be asked to work on a project by the union, and will move from project to project as their name comes up. Trade unions also provide extensive benefit and training directly to their members. Unionized workers can always apply for non-union job if they see one.

Non-union workers can work directly for a construction company or find jobs as they need them through organizations such as Merit Contractors Association, which also provides a benefits package for employees of its member companies and offers strong supports for training. In many ways the

CONSTRUCTION SNAPSHOT



HOURS AND LOCATION

Most work in construction is full-time during fairly regular daylight hours. Over-time is often available when it's busy. Many companies have enough business to keep workers close to home. Larger companies and unions working on major projects will often move workers closer to the field site.

WAGES

Wages in the trades vary but can easily reach \$30/hr and more, plus benefits. Apprentices earn a percentage of the full trade wage. For information about typical wage ranges for journeymen, see the Trades and Occupations section of the tradesecrets.gov.ab.ca website.

WHERE TO FIND WORK

Construction companies advertise heavily in newspapers and on Internet job boards (see Merit's Construction JobStores, Job Bank, Workopolis and Monster.ca). There are even a few ads between songs on local radio stations. Unions also hire directly. As a journeyman or apprentice with a union, the union will send out opportunities as they become available.

differences between non-union and union worksites is narrowing as each tries to attract talent with valuable benefit packages and ongoing training.

Career development

Working in a trade pays well and any trade is a career in its own right with ongoing skill development. But for journeymen wanting to take things one step further, there are always opportunities in management and training. Many journeymen also own their own business.

Opportunity is close

In Central Alberta, commercial and industrial projects are driving strong demand for construction workers, and journeymen can often find work a short drive from home. "In Central Alberta there's already a ton of activity in oil and gas servicing," explains Brad Pallister of B&M Recruiting. "There's also a huge opportunity for commercial growth in Central Alberta. There's going to be more and more investment coming into Central Alberta. It's a good time to be in trades. And it's a good time to be in industrial construction."



Major non-residential projects in Central Alberta

There are dozens of major construction projects in Central Alberta valued at over \$5 million. Here's a list of a few including their expected value and their location.

Red Deer, \$12.7M—David Thompson Health Region Reconstruction of Michener Centre into Office Space, Timcon Construction.

Red Deer, \$28M—Beca International. 'Executive Place' Office Building, Clark Builders

Red Deer, \$65M—David Thompson Health Region Qualico 'Michener Hill Village' Assisted Living / Supportive Housing, Scott Builders

Red Deer, \$16M—Precision Well Servicing office and shop building.

Red Deer, \$28M—City of Red Deer Community Centre Upgrades and Renovations—planned construction start April/May

Red Deer, \$122M—City of Red Deer Relocation of City's Public Works Yards to Three Mile Bend. Under construction, Stuart Olson Constructors

Red Deer, \$8M—City of Red Deer Addition of Police Station to North End Fire Station

Olds, \$80M—Cornerstone Shopping Centre, under construction

Olds, \$62M—Community Learning Campus, Shunda Consulting and Construction

Carstairs, \$9.2M—Elementary school, Shunda Consulting and Construction

Lacombe, \$300M—Windfarm, possible construction start early 2009 or early 2010

Sylvan Lake, \$10M—Under construction

Sylvan Lake, \$50M—Shopping centre with 10 buildings, under construction

Sylvan Lake, \$20M—Wal-Mart Canada Inc. Supercentre Store, Beju Industrial Park, under construction

Camrose, \$14M—Augustana Campus Library, Pentagon Structures Ltd.

Buildings are going up fast in Central Alberta, and any tradesperson that helps build them is well positioned to find work in the field. But here are five trades that employers said were in very short supply.

Electrician (NOC 7241)—There are thousands of electricians already employed in Alberta, yet the province will need between 340 and 460 new electricians by 2011, and that doesn't even include employment turnover. The electricians working on industrial and commercial construction, or even with large residential buildings, are generally specialists working with high voltage installations. The electrician union—International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW)—is a valuable source of information about careers in this trade. The median hourly wage for an electrician after three years was \$23.60/hr according to the 2007 Alberta Wage and Salary Survey, and apprentices can take their courses locally at Red Deer College.

Carpenter (NOC 7271)—Carpenters can be found at every stage of construction from erecting the scaffolding to making the final touches to wood details on a commercial project. In non-residential construction carpenters will usually specialize in a single part of the construction process. The median hourly wage for a carpenter after three years was \$21.63/hr according to the 2007 Alberta Wage and Salary Survey. Red Deer College offers courses in carpentry.

Sheet Metal Worker (NOC 7261)—Tin bashers, as they are often called, install the heating and air-conditioning vents that lace through large buildings, and they are always in demand, says Brad Pallister with B&M Recruiting. Like many workers on a construction site, sheet metal workers belong to a trade and they have to be either an apprentice or a certified journeyman. The median hourly wage for a sheet metal worker after three years was \$21.75/hr according to the 2007 Alberta Wage and Salary Survey, and apprentices can take courses at either NAIT or SAIT.

Steamfitter-pipefitter (NOC 7252)—The heating water pipes in a commercial building and the pipes that carry steam and chemicals in industrial projects are assembled by steamfitters and pipefitters, and these apprentices in Central Alberta can take their courses locally at Red Deer College. The median hourly wage for a steamfitter-pipefitter after three years was \$21.70/hr according to the 2007 Alberta Wage and Salary Survey.

Ironworker (NOC 7264)—The steel skeletons of large buildings are assembled by ironworkers. Since they work exclusively on large projects, ironworkers usually travel from project to project and are direct employees of contractors or work with a union. Very few are self-employed. In Alberta, NAIT is the only school offering courses in this trade. The median hourly wage for a sheet metal worker starting out was \$16.63/hr according to the 2007 Alberta Wage and Salary Survey. The median top salary was \$28.50/hr.

WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE A ...

Electrician

What do you enjoy about your job?

I love the variety of this job. Every day you come to work and there's something new. In this project there's the front office, which has a more residential feel, and if you go to the back of the shop you're working with high voltage and cable. There's some problem solving too, but in a big building like this working from the ground up, you know exactly what you're doing, and everything is labelled.

How did you start in this career?

I started my apprenticeship in January 2005 after a few jobs. My first job was in the oilpatch. It was awesome—tons of money, but I just didn't want to get caught in a lifestyle where people had four kids and they never saw them. And there was a lot of sitting around. I didn't have the personality for that. I like working with my hands. I considered a few trades, and decided electrical was the best fit for me, and I had a company here in Olds that would take me on.

Would you choose this career again?

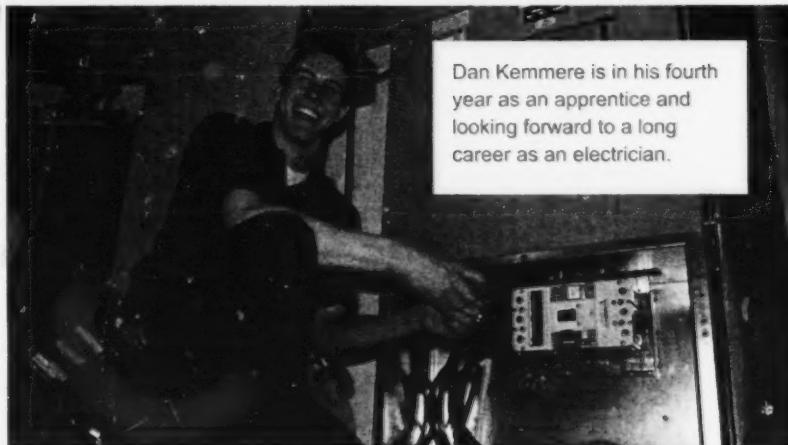
As a kid I would always be looking at the relays and electronics. I thought it was all pretty cool, and I was always interested in how it works together. I always thought it was interesting, and I'd definitely choose this again. And the pay is very reasonable for a small town.

Does your job affect your lifestyle?

No not really. The hours are good. It does make my life busier because I get friends calling me saying 'hey, can you wire my basement?' That's another thing I like about this job, you can help people. My parents just built a house and I wired the house for them. So it affects your lifestyle that way—you can help people a lot more in a trade.

What are some of the challenges of your job?

With a big job like this, it's organization. You've got two or three workers here that you're trying to keep busy. You've got to get this person doing this, and this person doing



Dan Kemmere is in his fourth year as an apprentice and looking forward to a long career as an electrician.

this. And myself, 'Ok what can I do?'

You've got to worry about the organization part first, and then you can do the work after. So, organization is a big thing.

What are your career goals?

Obviously the first goal is to get my journeyman ticket this year. I'll be going to school in the fall for that. I'd eventually like to get my masters. I still have a lot to learn here with Olds Electric. I've got a pretty good gig here, so I can't see myself moving on anytime soon, but in the long term I'd like to own my own company.

What advice would you give to someone looking at this career?

Don't be scared of the environment. When you first get to a big job like this, there may be a lot of things you've never seen before, so don't be intimidated. I learn best by jumping in head first.

CAREER PROFILE

Dan Kemmere

Kemmere started his work life right out of high school. "I was 18. I went into the oilpatch and it was great. I made a lot of money, but the lifestyle wasn't great." Dan's next step was into sales. "I tried selling cars for a bit and didn't like it at all. It was 12 hours a day sitting around and if you spend a few hours trying to sell a car but it falls through, it's depressing." After two mismatches, Kemmere decided to look at something he always loved: working with his hands. With a fondness for electric systems going all the way back to childhood, Kemmere chose a career as an electrician. Olds Electric was glad to take him on as an apprentice and four years later, Kemmere is on the verge of becoming a journeyman electrician.

Working as an ELECTRICIAN

Wages

A fully qualified electrician earns about \$30/hr, and often more. Apprentices receive a percentage of this pay depending on how far along they are in their program. In the first year, an apprentice receives 50 per cent. The rate goes to 60 per cent in the second year, 70 per cent in the third, and finally 80 per cent in the fourth year. There are also a variety of support programs to help apprentices through school (see page 5).

Education

To register with Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training, apprentices must have an Alberta high school diploma with Pure or Applied Math 20 and at least 10 credits in a high school science or equivalent, or pass an entrance exam. The apprenticeship program takes four years and includes eight weeks worth of technical training in the first three years and 12 in the fourth. For high school students, the Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) lets students earn credits toward apprenticeship training and a high school diploma at the same time.

Hiring Tips

Often apprentices start in a labourer position (see page 3, Where to Find Work), show they can do the job, and are then taken on as apprentices. There are a variety of pre-trade programs to help employees become apprentices. Many unions have programs, including IBEW's Pre-Apprenticeship Candidate Training Program (PACT). Red Deer College also has pre-trade programs.

Budgets\$ for school

Managing your money during school

Alberta's apprenticeship system makes learning a trade fairly easy on the pocketbook. For most of the year, apprentices earn a steady paycheque as they learn their trade on the job. It's the four to 12 weeks when apprentices go to school every year that can take a bite out of the bank account. However, with some planning, help from the government and employers, paying for school can be reduced to a minor inconvenience.

There are three major ways to help reduce the headaches of paying for tuition and books, and the first is by far the most important.

#1 Budgeting skills

Apprentices who have spent most of the year working usually qualify for EI payments while they go to school. At a maximum of 55 per cent of regular pay (the maximum benefit is \$435/week), EI will not replace a normal income, and the payments don't start immediately. But EI is reliable and apprentices can plan around lower income. "Real life experience about how to plan for the future and budget properly can be a big advantage for people going through an apprentice program," says Scott Cook with Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training.

In theory budgeting is fairly simple—add up all your income, add up all your expenses and you should have some money leftover at the end of the month. In practice, it's a little more difficult.

Most people can add up their income sources quickly and accurately. It's the other side of the equation that's troublesome. Many are stunned to find out how much they actually spend on things like coffee and parking. A six dollar fast food lunch every working day will add up to \$240 in eight weeks of school. Financially, it's far better to buy food once a week at a grocery store.

If you're having trouble keeping expenses down, there are several resources that can help. Red Deer College's website has a lengthy list of tips under its 'Awards and Scholarships' page. The Alberta Government's Alberta Learning Information Service (ALIS) website offers helpful advice and links to a variety of program such as CanLearn—a useful online budget planner, and the Credit Counselling Services of Alberta. The common thread throughout these sources is the

JOB SEARCH TIPS

work it out

importance of knowing how much you earn, and how much you spend. From there you can make decisions.

#2 Scholarships and grants

"Always apply for scholarships," says Cook. "They are far more common than people think and they can really help." For students in Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) there are 500 scholarships worth \$1,000 each. Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training offers another 200 annual scholarships. "In a single year an apprentice is looking at about \$1,000 for a years' school and books. A scholarship can cover that," says Cook (visit www.tradesecrets.gov.ab.ca and choose Scholarships & Awards for more information). There are also a variety of scholarships available through training institutions such. Red Deer College, for example has a lengthy list of scholarships on its 'Awards and Scholarships' page.

#3 Employers

Probably the fastest growing source of financial support comes from employers, and for good reason. "For the employers it helps improve retention in a tight labour market," explains Cook.

Some employers will even continue paying the full salary right through school. Cook estimates about 20 per cent of employers have taken up the practice, and in some larger companies it's standard procedure.

Another growing practice is to reimburse tuition costs after the courses are complete. A few companies will put aside money for apprentices, taking a portion of the regular paycheque and releasing the funds during school.

Back to basics:

Record, Review, and Revise

Scholarships and employer support can often help with the costs of tuition and books. But without proper budgeting skills, EI probably won't cover all expenses, and apprentices can quickly find themselves falling behind financially while in school. "If they don't know how to budget they can get into problems," says Cook.

If the bills are stacking up remember the basics—know your income, know your expenses, and adjust as needed, or as ALIS puts it: Record, Review, and Revise.

APPRENTICE INCENTIVE GRANT: HELPING APPRENTICES GAIN RED SEAL CERTIFICATION

What is a Red Seal?

The Interprovincial Standards Red Seal Program allows qualified tradespeople to practice their trade anywhere in Canada where the trade is designated without having to write further examinations. There are 49 trades included in the Red Seal Program accounting for over 88 per cent of all apprentices and more than 80 per cent of the total trades workforce in Canada.

To obtain Red Seal certification a qualified journeymen needs to complete an interprovincial exam. For more information visit www.tradesecrets.org.



Funding help

To help more apprentices become fully qualified journeymen, the federal government offers a taxable cash grant of \$1,000 per year (maximum of two grants available). The Apprenticeship Incentive Grant (AIG) is available to registered apprentices once they have successfully completed their first or second year or level of an apprenticeship program in one of the Red Seal trades. To apply for a grant and for more information visit www.servicecanada.gc.ca and click on 'Education and Training.'

Labour Force Survey Highlights

Just over a year ago, you could hear fear when many employers spoke. The labour crunch was probably at its worst, and there seemed no end in sight. And while the labour shortage is by no means over (the regional unemployment rate is still hovering around three per cent), the anecdotal evidence coming back from employers has changed dramatically.

"It's not the same situation," says Terry Ireland of Red Deer's Goldec Hamm's Manufacturing Ltd. "A year and a half ago, we were desperate. It's OK now."

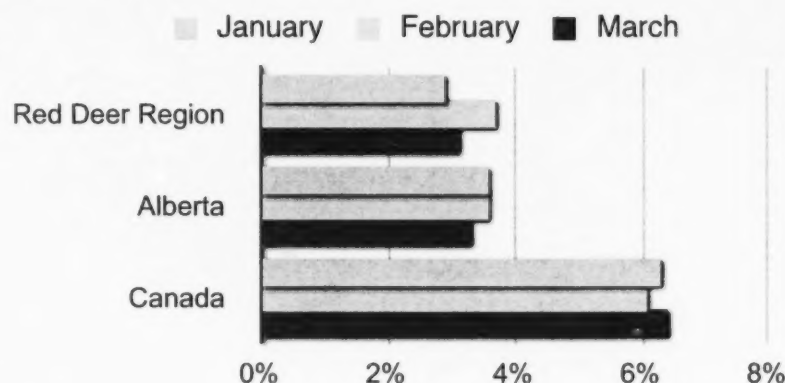
For many companies that rely on the oil and gas sector, low natural gas prices have stalled growth, and curtailed their labour needs. Meanwhile, the high Canadian dollar has caused problems at manufacturers selling into the US market.

But in spite of a few setbacks, the regional economy still remains in excellent shape, and well able to handle even large-scale job losses. When Convergys announced 280 layoffs for the end of June, economists with the City of Red Deer were confident few would be out of a job for long, and the current landlord of Convergys' contact centre was moving quickly to replace the loss. Bower Place Shopping Centre already plans to renovate Convergys' location and replace the contact centre with about two dozen new stores by the autumn.

The quick conversion of the mall reflects some the strength of the local economy as employers add staff and keep the region's unemployment low.

Once again, the Central Region is showing a very low unemployment rate that hasn't budged much in two years. In the first quarter of 2006 (Q1 2006 includes January, February and March), the unemployment rate stood at 3.2 per cent. In the first quarter of 2007, it was 3.1 per cent. This year the regional first quarter unemployment rate fell yet again to three per cent even. Much of the new job creation came from the oil and gas sector, construction, health care and social assistance, manufacturing, and retail and trade. Such a low rate indicates an extremely tight labour market.

Unemployment Rate

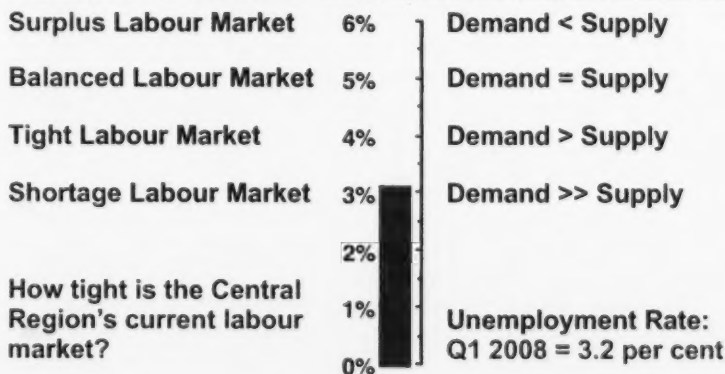


Region	Central Alberta Labour Force Statistics *				
	Jan.	Feb.	March	Q1 2008	Q1 2007
Labour force (000s)	274.6	274.1	273.1	273.9	266
Employed (000s)	266.6	265.9	264.5	269.3	257.6
Unemployed (000s)	8	8.2	8.6	8.3	8.3
Unemployment Rate	2.9%	3.0%	3.2%	3.0%	3.1%

NOTE: *Central Alberta data is combined data for the economic regions of Red Deer, Camrose - Drumheller, and Banff, Jasper and Rocky Mountain House. Unemployment figures for Banff-Jasper-Rocky Mountain House were calculated when suppressed. All data are unadjusted.

SOURCE: Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry Labour Force Statistics, employment.alberta.ca/lmi (Statistics Canada Labour Force Survey data)

Labour Market Thermometer



Women in Trades

Making room for a new generation of workers

**Best
Practice**
FOR EMPLOYERS

Unlike medicine, the trades is one area where women have yet to make major inroads into the workforce. Carpentry, electrical work and nearly all construction jobs are still male-dominated occupations. But maybe not for long.

Employers are short of workers, and tapping underused labour pools such as women, Aboriginal people and older workers isn't just an option; it's a necessity, and one that a few employers find rewarding.

"It's an untapped part of the labour market and it really helped when we were short last year," says Terry Ireland of Red Deer's Goldec Hamm's Manufacturing Ltd. "We advertised specifically for women workers, and we've had no problems." One source of new staff has been Academic Express' pre-trade course for women (see below).

Goldec now employs five female apprentices and journeymen and Ireland says there's been virtually no changes to the work environment. "We recently put in washrooms, but that's about the only change we've made. It's the same job, and we believe the women can do the work just as much as the men."

“There's
no reason
to not employ
women. No
reason at
all.”

Some of the ease Ireland has with women in the workforce may have to do with the company culture at Goldec.

"We're family-oriented here. We work regular hours, and some overtime, and if someone needs time off for a family matter, they have it," says Ireland.

A family-first approach to employment where

work-life balance counts, not only helps with women, it's also the very quality youth, older workers and Aboriginal people value. And Ireland argues it's critical to keep employees. "It's a totally different workforce and workplace than it was 10 or 20 years ago. Employers have to make changes."

Helping women get a head start in the trades

Unfortunately, the number of women working in the trades is still far too low. "We have a long way to go when you consider that women represent less than three per cent of the apprentices in non-traditional trades in Alberta," says executive director JudyLynn Archer, with Women Building Futures (WBF at www.womenbuildingfutures.com), an Alberta-based non-profit organization helping women get their start in the trades.

WBF operates a highly successful pre-trade program that provides the necessary skills and knowledge to pass the Trades Entrance Exam and to obtain and maintain employment in the trades.



Jodie Braun is a first year apprentice with an electric company in Olds. She is also the first female to apprentice with the company. "It's a little bit intimidating working with a bunch of guys, but I'm pursuing my dreams and what I want to do."

From Ireland's perspective, employing women is a non-issue. "They're capable of getting the same skills as a man. Really there is no difference." But for women entering the trades, there can be hurdles.

Employers such as Goldec are providing the right environment for women, and giving them the room to succeed. But for women entering a field still dominated by men, the first steps into a new career can be a little intimidating.

From time to time Jodi Braun, a first year electrician at Olds Electrical and Lighting Ltd. worries she can't match the upper body strength of other male counterparts. Her employer Terry Peterman has no such fear. "She's a great employee," says Peterman. "I really hope she sticks with it."

While WBF operates out of Edmonton, Red Deer's Academic Express offers a regional pre-trade program that's very similar. This eight-month program consists of 5 ½ months of in-class instruction and 2 ½ months of on-the-job training in the trades. The program is designed to cover all of the essentials skills needed to work in the trades including academic upgrading, First Aid / CPR, WHMIS, Construction Safety Training System and emergency response and preparation.

With a focus on carpentry and construction, this pre-trade course also covers woodworking, power tools and forklift training. For more information about this program visit www.academicexpress.ca. Participants in the program may be eligible for funding from the government.

EMPLOYERS

First impressions count

Continued from page 1

Why bother?

Besides explaining to a new employee how to fill out a timesheet, there are several advantages to doing a thorough orientation.

- ☑ A good orientation will help a new employee begin work quickly and do a better job.
- ☑ Orientations help employees fit into the business early on.
- ☑ Orientations help maintain a safe and healthy workplace.
- ☑ Orientations help new workers understand the corporate culture.

How to do it well

A key part of doing a good orientation is tailoring the orientation to the employee. At Original Joe's, Gilchrist says experienced workers can be serving on their second or third shift, but for most inexperienced workers that may not happen until the fourth or fifth shift.

It's also important to tailor the orientation to the business, and that may include everything from corporate history, to knowing where the supplies are. "We usually have someone come in the morning and sit down with them and discuss the story of Original Joe's, scheduling policy, dress and sick leave. After that we go over everything they need to know, and we

take them on a tour," says Gilchrist. "We also have them work a variety of jobs because that helps them understand the business."

It's surprising how much a new employee needs to know, so it's critical that employers stay organized during an orientation. There are several steps employers can take.

- ☑ Tell other people that there's a new starter, prepare their working area, organize any necessary equipment and have pertinent documentation ready for them to read, such as an information pack.
- ☑ Prepare an orientation checklist including everything that needs to be covered and what needs to be done (the ALIS website has a checklist guide in their Tips section).
- ☑ Make sure the key people who will be involved in the orientation know about it and are ready.
- ☑ Arrange in advance any instruction or training courses needed.
- ☑ Include the informal workplace procedures, such as how the coffee kitty works or social events.
- ☑ Once you've developed a good orientation, set it out in writing and use it whenever a new person starts.

Making a good first impression is important for any job, and can be far more than covering the basics. "It shows you care about your employees and how they do on the job," says Gilchrist. "There definitely are some places that don't make the time and they just have higher turnover."

EMPLOYER Resources

Both federal and provincial governments have practical programs to help meet the current need for workers in this tight labour market. Here are a few programs that can be of assistance to business.

Information sources

The Labour Market Information page on the Alberta Employment and Immigration website offers links to labour force statistics, forecasts, and wage and salary information. (employment.alberta.ca/lmi)

- The Central Alberta Economic Partnership (CAEP) website (www.centralalberta.ab.ca) has hundreds of links to information sources, and programs, including:
 - Support for Training Workers
 - Wage Subsidy Programs
 - Recruiting Employees
 - Employment Services in Central Alberta
 - Foreign Worker Employer Guide

Seminars and networking

Employer Connections are held every Wednesday at the Labour Market Information Centre, 2nd Floor, First Red Deer Place, 4911-51 St. (across from the Provincial Building).

The meetings are an opportunity to meet job seekers, employment agencies and career counsellors.

Each week a single employer is showcased and presents their perspective.

To participate free of charge call (403) 340-4347 and ask for a Business and Industry Liaison.

Labour solutions

- Red Deer Aboriginal Employment Services.
Ph. (403) 358-7734
- Career Assistance Network teams unemployed workers with employers.
Ph. (403) 341-7811
- Employment Placement Support Services supports adults over 25, and persons with disabilities age 18 and over.
Ph. (403) 343-6249
- Employment Access offers employment programs for clients with disabilities.
Ph. (403) 341-2363
- DRES provides support and assistance to employers hiring people with disabilities. Contact the Canada-Alberta Service Centre in Red Deer.
Ph. (403) 340-5353

Personalized help when needed

There are dozens of programs available to employers. Alberta Employment and Immigration employees will visit the workplace and provide a summary of options and opportunities.

For example, they can direct managers to initiatives that will help their business.

For more information call (403) 340-4347 and ask for a Business and Industry Liaison.

Sign up free: We're live and online

This publication, *In the News*, (an electronic digest about regional business expansions, relocations and closures) and *Finding Work In*, which profiles different career opportunities, are available online at employment.alberta.ca/central.

A free subscription service will notify you by e-mail when the latest edition of each product comes out.

On the same web page there are Labour Market News products for Stettler, Wetaskiwin, Vermillion and Wainwright.

JOB SEEKER

Resources

There are many resources in the central region that can be helpful to job seekers and workers alike.

Where to find us

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Job search and career websites

- www.jobbank.gc.ca (Job listings, links and other services)
- www.alis.gov.ab.ca (Alberta Learning Information Service)
- www.workopolis.ca (Job listings)
- www.monster.ca (Job listings)
- www.nextsteps.org (Job resources for youth)
- www.albertajobs.com (Job listings)
- www.hgcareers.com (Job listings)
- www.healthjobs.ab.ca (Health care job listings)

Job search and career information by phone

Alberta Career Information Hotline:
1-800-661-3753

Fax: (780) 422-0372 TDD: (780) 422-5283

Resumé review service

The Government of Alberta e-Resumé Review Service is a great way to have a resumé reviewed and improved, before sending it to employers.

To access the service, log on to www.alis.gov.ab.ca/hotline/resume and follow the instructions to send your resumé for review.

The service is free to residents of Alberta and those seeking work in Alberta.

Resources for labour market information

These websites offer a wealth of labour market information on Alberta and specific communities.

- employment.alberta.ca/lmi (Alberta Employment and Immigration)
- www.alis.gov.ab.ca (Alberta Learning Information Service)
- www.albertafirst.com (Business and economic information)
- www.centralalberta.ab.ca (Central Alberta Economic Partnership)

- www.alis.gov.ab.ca/employment/lmi/alberta.asp (Labour market information across Alberta)
- www.labourmarketinformation.ca (Service Canada)

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The meetings are an opportunity to meet employers face to face.

New to Town?

Past issues of Labour Market News featured information for communities in Central Alberta.

See past bulletins for employment, social services, health care, transportation and other great resources available in your community.

CITY / TOWN	MONTH
Camrose	July 2007
Didsbury	October 2007
Drayton Valley	June 2007
Innisfail	September 2007
Lacombe	August 2007
Olds	February 2007
Ponoka	November 2007
Red Deer	January 2007
Rocky Mountain House	April 2007
Stettler	March 2007
Sylvan Lake	December 2007
Wetaskiwin	May 2007

**LABOUR MARKET INFORMATION CENTRES**

Labour Market Information Centres (LMIC's) provide information to help you make career, learning and work decisions. LMICs have books, magazines, newspapers, software and videos about employment-related topics.

There are LMIC's across Alberta. For a complete list, see: employment.alberta.ca/lmic.

LMIC's in Central Alberta:

Camrose Alberta Service Centre
3rd Flr., Gemini Centre, 6708 - 48 Ave.
Ph. (780) 608-2525

Drayton Valley Sub-Office
2nd Floor Provincial Building
5136 - 51 Ave. Ph. (780) 542-3134

Olds Alberta Service Centre
4905 - 50 Ave. Ph. (403) 507-8060

Red Deer Canada-Alberta Service Centre
2nd Floor First Red Deer Place, 4911 - 51 St.
Ph. (403) 340-5353

Rocky Mountain House Alberta Service Centre, 4919 - 51 St. Ph. (403) 845-8590

Stettler Alberta Service Centre
4835 - 50 St. Ph. (403) 742-7586

Wetaskiwin Alberta Service Centre
1st Floor Macadil Building
5201 - 51 Ave. Ph. (780) 361 1272

Lloydminster LMIC
5016 - 48 St. Ph. (780) 871-6445

Wainwright LMIC
810 - 14 Ave. Ph. (780) 842-7500

Vermilion LMIC
4701 - 52 St. Ph. (780) 853-8164

